



GLOBAL CLIMATE COALITION

October 22, 1996

Ms. Elizabeth Dowdeswell
Executive Director
United Nations Environment Program
15 chemin des Anémones,
CH 1219—Châtelaine, Geneva
Switzerland

Dear Madame Director:

As an industry member who has been involved in activities undertaken by Jacqueline Aloisi de Larderel, I read with regret your recent attack on industry critics of the *Second Assessment Report* of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) at the IPCC meeting in Mexico City on September 13, 1996. By attacking the motives of the Global Climate Coalition and other industry groups, you unnecessarily polarize an already contentious debate and make future collaborative action between government and industry organizations even more difficult.

The concerns we have expressed are serious — that substantial deletions and other significant changes were made to the scientific material in the *Second Assessment* dealing with the highly controversial issue of whether there has been human-induced change in the Earth's climate, and that these changes were made after acceptance and approval of this material by the relevant IPCC bodies. The revised version was never re-submitted to the IPCC for reapproval.

These changes, affecting more than 15 sections of Chapter 8 of the report, were neither cosmetic nor minor; the entire "Concluding Summary" of the chapter was deleted, including such caveats as the following:

- "None of the studies cited above has shown clear evidence that we can attribute the observed [climate] changes to the specific cause of increases in greenhouse gases."
- "No study to date has positively attributed all or part of the climate change observed to date to anthropogenic [man-made] causes."
- "Any claims of positive detection and attribution of significant climate change are likely to remain controversial until uncertainties in the total natural variability of [the] climate system are reduced."

- Attribution of an observed climate change to a particular mechanism [such as human activities] can be established only by testing competing hypotheses. Thus unique attribution of a 'significant' change requires specifying the signals of all likely alternative explanations, and statistical determination that none of these mechanisms is a satisfactory explanation for the observed change. This is a difficult task, and one that detection studies to date have not addressed in a rigorous statistical way.

The net effect of removing these caveats is to undercut what Working Group I scientists thought they were doing when they accepted the "final" language in Madrid. The version of Chapter 8 accepted by Working Group 1 and the full IPCC called attention to important scientific investigations that will be necessary in order to draw conclusions about attributing climate change to human activities. The original Chapter 8 made plain that those investigations have yet to take place.

Nothing in the IPCC Rules permits or contemplates that anybody, regardless of position, has the right to change the underlying report of the IPCC scientists once it has been accepted by the working group. If those who changed the report were to now argue that IPCC procedures *can* reasonably be interpreted to allow such alterations, the rules should be changed. When important scientific information is deleted from the underlying report prepared by scientists, and when new material is added, apparently to conform that report to the political views of those anxious to attribute climate change to human activities, the resulting document is neither comprehensive, nor balanced, nor objective. The fact that the lead author of Chapter 8 and IPCC co-chair have refused to make public the comments that have been asserted to be the basis of these changes only increases suspicions about motivation.

This sad departure from IPCC protocol led Frederick Seitz, president emeritus of Rockefeller University and chairman of the George C. Marshall Institute to write:

"In my more than 60 years as a member of the American scientific community, including service as president of both the National Academy of Sciences and the American Physical Society, I have never witnessed a more disturbing corruption of the peer-review process."

Despite this serious breach of scientific protocol, it is never too late for corrective action. I was encouraged by your Mexico City offer to seek scientific resolution of what ought to have remained a scientific issue: "The IPCC is the forum for assessing climate change, and I repeat my invitation to those with scientific credentials who are unconvinced by the *Second Assessment Report* to work with the panel in the search for a universally-accepted truth."

[illegible]

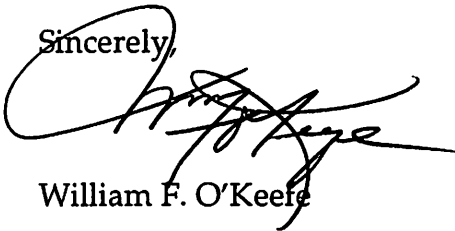
1. The first of these is the fact that the United States has a large and growing population of people who are not citizens of the United States. This is a result of the large number of people who have been admitted to the United States as permanent residents, and the fact that many of these people have not yet become citizens. This is a problem because these people are not entitled to the same rights as citizens, and they are not subject to the same responsibilities. This is a problem because these people are not entitled to the same rights as citizens, and they are not subject to the same responsibilities.

I endorse the spirit of that invitation I also want to make you aware of a suggestion I have made that the U.S. National Academy of Sciences be asked to set up a task force to objectively review the state of science on climate change. Its assessment of the adequacy of research on water vapor, oceans, solar activity, and other key findings of the *Second Assessment Report* would be an excellent place to start, particularly as those issues affect the findings of Working Group I, Chapter 8. Such a review could help to reduce the contentious nature of many discussions about the Working Group I report.

Certainly there is much careful work to be done, not only in climate science but also in economic and policy matters. The choice is not between action and inaction. It is between flexible, cost-effective, long-term policies based on a solid scientific foundation and short-sighted efforts to prematurely limit near-term emissions in developed nations. That would cause serious economic damage without demonstrable benefits to the climate system. Many believe that the anonymous redactors of chapter 8 were attempting to promote this short-sighted course of action when they altered the final text to reduce uncertainties.

I hope you would agree that the record needs to be set straight so that policy makers can take informed action. Certainly, it does no good to attack those of us who raised this matter, for an attack cannot change the science nor settle a doubtful public's mind. I urge you therefore to support a positive course of action, such as an independent review of the Working Group I report by the National Academy of Sciences, so that that any doubt will be removed about future IPCC reports and activities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. O'Keefe', written over a large, stylized circular flourish.

William F. O'Keefe

cc: The Honorable Timothy Wirth
Dr. Bert Bolin
Sir John Houghton
Dr. Benjamin Santer